

**EPI Update for Friday, September 5, 2008**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Dr. Kenneth Soyemi is leaving**
- **September is National Food Safety Education Month**
- **Cryptosporidium (crypto) remains in Iowa**
- **Consider La Crosse encephalitis on your list of differentials**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**Dr. Kenneth Soyemi is leaving**

We are sorry to announce that Dr. Soyemi, deputy state epidemiologist and CADE medical director, has accepted a position with the Illinois Department of Public Health. He will be greatly missed by all of us at IDPH as well as many clinicians and local public health personnel throughout Iowa.

**September is National Food Safety Education Month**

September 2008 marks the 14th annual National Food Safety Education Month. The theme for this year is Be Food Safe. Risks of handling food unsafely at home are more common than most people think. The four easy lessons of 1) Clean, 2) Separate, 3) Cook and 4) Chill can help prevent harmful bacteria from making your family sick. In each issue of the EPI Update this month, CADE and the Bureau of Environmental Health Services will provide tips for educating the public on steps they can use to handle and prepare food safely.

The first step to preparing food safely is to CLEAN hands and surfaces often. Bacteria and viruses can be spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives and countertops. Frequent cleaning can keep that from happening. To stop the spread of disease-causing organisms and prevent food-borne illnesses, follow these important guidelines:

- Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds before and after handling food.
- Run cutting boards and utensils through the dishwasher or wash them in hot soapy water after each use.
- Keep countertops clean by washing with hot soapy water after preparing food.

For more information visit [www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/september.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/september.html).

***Cryptosporidium* (crypto) remains in Iowa**

The risk of *Cryptosporidium* infection does not end just because many public pools are closing for the season. It is important to remember that there are multiple potential sources of exposure to *Cryptosporidium* in our environment.

These sources include contaminated food or drinking water, ill people, or infected animals as well as recreational water.

*Cryptosporidium* can cause illness in humans as well as in animals. *C. parvum* and *C. hominis* are the most common species of *Cryptosporidium* identified in human infection. While *C. hominis* is primarily a human pathogen, *C. parvum* is also found in animals, particularly in calves.

More than 100 cases of crypto have been reported to IDPH in 2008, including 36 cases in southeast Iowa since the end of August. While the total number of crypto cases is down significantly from last year, Iowans need to be aware the risk for illness still exists.

The following people have an increased risk of *Cryptosporidium* infection:

- Persons who have contact with infected animals.
- Persons who consume unpasteurized dairy products, unpasteurized juices and cider, or unwashed fruits and vegetables.
- Persons who have swallowed recreational water (e.g. lake, river, pool, or hot tub) or contaminated drinking water.
- Persons in close contact with infected individuals (e.g. those in the same family or household or the same child care facility).
- Travelers to disease-endemic areas.

The current FDA licensed treatment, nitazoxanide (Alinia®), is approved for the treatment of diarrhea caused by *Cryptosporidium* in people with healthy immune systems. For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/cryptosporidiosis/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/cryptosporidiosis/default.htm).

### **Consider La Crosse encephalitis on your list of differentials**

La Crosse encephalitis emerged as a public health concern in the 1960s, in the namesake county in Wisconsin. The virus is transmitted by the *Aedes triseriatus* (the tree hole mosquito), most commonly found in northeastern Iowa. La Crosse encephalitis remains a leading cause of pediatric encephalitis.

This year, there have been two human cases of LaCrosse encephalitis reported in Wisconsin. Therefore, we ask healthcare providers to consider LaCrosse encephalitis on your list of differentials, particularly for children that reside in northeastern Iowa counties. Patients with La Crosse encephalitis typically exhibit the following symptoms: headache, fever, vomiting, seizures, and disorientation.

The University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory offers testing for LaCrosse virus in addition to the following arboviruses: West Nile, Western Equine encephalitis, Eastern Equine encephalitis, and St. Louis encephalitis.

### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Iowa Environmental Health Association (IEHA) annual fall conference:  
October 21- 22

Oct 20 will be the testing day for anyone taking the NEHA exams  
Marshalltown, Iowa  
[www.ieha.net/index\\_Page862.htm](http://www.ieha.net/index_Page862.htm).

IEHA consists of hundreds of working health professionals in counties across Iowa, and include city and county health departments, IDPH, the Department of Inspections and Appeals, the University Hygienic Laboratory, the food industry, county engineers, Iowa State University, the Iowa Water Well Association, the wastewater industry, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Additional participants include the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Ground Water Association, the Iowa Public Health Association, and the International Association of Milk, Food, and Environmental Sanitarians. Members seek to promote and protect the various aspects of public health to the residents of Iowa. In return, IEHA strives to develop its members by increasing skills, education, efficiency, and professionalism.

Midwest Rural & Agricultural Safety and Health (MRASH)  
November 20-21  
Davenport, Iowa  
[www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH/](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/ICASH/).

Hosted by Iowa's Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health, this conference will provide an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, and agricultural producers to communicate on rural and agricultural needs, services, research, and methods for research to practice implementation. A central purpose of this conference is to enhance collaboration in solving agricultural safety and health problems. The intended audience is agricultural safety and health professionals, health care professionals (MDs, RNs, PAs, NPs, respiratory therapists, mental health professionals), occupational and environmental health professionals, educators, agricultural engineers, commodity representatives, county extension staff, hospital and health care administrators, farmers, media and policy makers.

**Have a healthy and happy week!**  
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